# A nest of the Sapphire-vented Puffleg *Eriocnemis luciani*

*by Karl-L. Schuchmann*

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During a general ornithological survey in mid-February 1977 on the western slope of Volcano Pichincha, Ecuador (00°10'S, 78°33'W), I discovered a nest of the Sapphire-vented Puffleg *Eriocnemis luciani*. To my knowledge, no reports exist on the nest of this hummingbird nor that of any other species of the genus. I provide here details of the nest, and also of the eggs and the micro-habitat where the nest was found. The nest and the eggs are now in the collection of the Zoological Research Institute and Museum Alexander Koenig, Bonn.

The Sapphire-vented Puffleg is a common species of bushy subparamo slopes up to open paramo, a habitat often found in the mountains around Quito (Ortiz-Crespo 1975). Its nest was discovered at an altitude of 3500 m, on a steep roadbank, on 16 February 1977. The slope was overgrown with shrubs and masses of grass. My attention was drawn to the nest site by the female appearing at the steep road side, loudly and jerkily calling "tick-tick" and swiftly disappearing underneath a bulk of dense thicket overhanging the slope. The nest was concealed by thick layers of grass. It was attached at one side to a thin twig, forming a more or less hanging construction. The nest consisted of a mass of moss, light greenish lichen and small pieces of fern leaves, held together by spider webs and soft parts of plumose pappus from a composite flower. The inner cup was not lined with fine plant material or animal hair typical of some other nests of high-altitude trochilids (e.g. see Carpenter 1976, Wiedenfeld 1985). Nests of similar lateral attachment, shape and nesting material are known from the closely allied genus *Haplophaedia* (Miller 1963, Schuchmann 1979).

The nest of *E. luciani* was roughly circular in shape and had the following dimensions:– inner diameter 3.8 cm, outer diameter 6.7 cm, depth of cup 2.9 cm, total depth 8.0 cm. It contained 2 fresh, elliptical, white eggs, measuring 16.0 × 9.7 mm and 15.7 × 10.0 mm respectively. These measurements are within the range given by Schoenwetter (1967, presumably from personal communication with A. Ruschi, since there is no trace of the latter having recorded any measurements). Only the female was seen at the nest.

The well-sheltered nest site underneath dense vegetation presumably accounts for the lack of lining material often found in exposed nests of Andean hummingbirds (e.g. Snow 1980, Wiedenfeld 1985). The thermal amelioration effect of such micro-habitats has been documented in detail by Calder (1973, 1974).

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# On the identity of *Phaethornis maranhaoensis* Grantsau, 1968 (Trochilidae)

*by Christoph Hinkelmann*

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While undertaking a zoogeographical analysis of several *Phaethornis* species, I came upon evidence which led me to question the validity of *Phaethornis maranhaoensis* Grantsau, 1968, a species already regarded as doubtful by Mayr & Vuilleumier (1983). Grantsau's (1968) description of *Phaethornis maranhaoensis* is based on 9 specimens, all males, from Imperatriz and São Bento, Maranhão, Brazil. He compared these birds with the closely related, congeneric species *P. idaliae* and *P. nattereri*, both of which also occur in Brazil. Whereas *P. idaliae* is endemic to the endangered forests of SE Brazil and easily distinguished from *P. maranhaoensis* by differences in both size and coloration, *P. nattereri* occurs sympatrically with the new species. According to Grantsau (1968) the differences between *P. maranhaoensis* and *P. nattereri* are as follows:

(1) The throat is darker and the sides of the throat are more reddish in *P. maranhaoensis* than in *P. nattereri*.

(2) The upper tail-coverts of *P. maranhaoensis* are bronzy greenish with chestnut-reddish margins, whereas those of *P. nattereri* are uniformly chestnut-reddish.

(3) The tail in *P. maranhaoensis* is shorter and the distance between the tips of the central and outermost rectrices is smaller than in *P. nattereri*.

The differences in the shape of the tail and the coloration of the upper tail-coverts are illustrated by Grantsau (1968, Fig. [4]).